

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for assaying activity of a virus to determine viral stability and potency comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting a plurality of cells susceptible to caspase 3 induction with said virus obtained from a first formulation, wherein said virus induces caspase 3 activity; and  
(b) measuring said caspase 3 activity as an indication of virus activity,  
wherein said steps (a) and (b) are repeated with either: (i) said virus taken from a second formulation, said second formulation being different than said first formulation, and the difference in caspase 3 activity from said virus taken from said first and second formulation provides an indication of virus stability and potency in said first formulation compared to said second formulation; or (ii) said virus taken from said first formulation at two or more time intervals and the difference in caspase 3 activity between said two or more time intervals provides an indication of virus stability and potency in said first formulation.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said caspase 3 activity is measured using a caspase 3 substrate linked to a fluorimetric or a colorimetric moiety.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of claim 2, wherein said substrate is the peptide Asp-Glu-Val-Asp (SEQ ID NO: 1).

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 3, wherein said virus is either measles virus, mumps virus, or rubella virus.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 4, wherein said plurality of cells is either Vero cells or RK-13 cells.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 3, wherein prior to said step (a) said virus was lyophilized.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The method of claim 1 ~~[[3]]~~, wherein said steps (a) and (b) are repeated with said virus taken from said first formulation at two or more time intervals.  
~~wherein viral activity is assayed at two or more different time intervals by performing said step (a) followed by said step (b) at two or more time intervals.~~

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 3, wherein after said step (a) and prior to said step (b) said cells were frozen and then thawed.

Claims 9-17 (canceled):

Claim 18 (previously presented): A method for assaying activity of a virus comprising the steps of:

- (a) contacting a plurality of cells susceptible to caspase 3 induction with said virus, wherein said virus is either measles virus, mumps virus, or rubella virus; and
- (b) measuring said caspase 3 activity as an indication of virus activity.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method of claim 18, wherein said plurality of cells is either Vero cells or RK-13 cells.

Claim 20 (new): The method of claim 18, wherein said steps (a) and (b) is preformed to determine the caspase 3 activity of said virus present in a first formulation and in a second formulation, said second formulation being different than said first formulation, wherein the difference in caspase 3 activity in said first and second formulation provides an indication of virus stability and potency in said first formulation compared to said second formulation.

Claim 21 (new): The method of claim 18, wherein said method is preformed to determine the caspase 3 activity of said virus present in a formulation at two or more time intervals, wherein said virus is removed from said formulation at two or more time intervals and

the activity is measured by performing said step (a) followed by said step (b) at said two or more time intervals, wherein the difference in caspase 3 activity at said two or more time intervals provides an indication of virus stability and potency in said formulation.

Claim 22 (new): The method of claim 18, wherein said virus is either measles virus or mumps virus.

Claim 23 (new): The method of claim 20, wherein said virus is either measles virus or mumps virus.

Claim 24 (new): The method of claim 21, wherein said virus is either measles virus or mumps virus.

Claim 25 (new): The method of claim 1, wherein said steps (a) and (b) are repeated with said virus taken from a second formulation different from said first formulation.